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# GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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## *THE MT. SCOPUS PROBLEM*

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
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## THE MT. SCOPUS PROBLEM

Among the outstanding points of disagreement between Israel and Jordan are the status and boundaries of Mt. Scopus, a promontory lying immediately northeast of the city of Jerusalem. This high land dominates the Jordanian-occupied Old City portion of Jerusalem and overlooks the roads linking the Old City with Ramallah and Jericho in Jordan. The link to Ramallah proved to be vital in the fight for the Old City in 1948, for it was by this road that Glubb Pasha was able to move 400 Arab Legionnaires into the Old City, thus establishing Jordanian control over that part of Jerusalem. The Israelis occupied most of the remainder of Jerusalem and, against instructions from the United Nations, made this city their capital.

The status of Mt. Scopus has been set forth in two basic documents. The first is the Israel-Jordan Commanders Agreement of 7 July 1948. This agreement assigned the area to the protection of the United Nations, and the boundaries were delineated on an attached map. The second document is the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement of 3 April 1949. Among other things, Article VIII of this agreement provided for the resumption of the normal functioning, including free access thereto, of such institutions as the Hebrew University and the Hadassa Hospital on Mt. Scopus. Neither document has been lived up to. Instead of being a demilitarized zone, Mt. Scopus has become an area occupied by both Israeli and Jordanian military forces, and one in which there is no agreement about the implementation of Article VIII. The United Nations has been denied inspection rights, particularly in the Israeli-occupied zone, and therefore has been ineffective in its protective function. Both sides now consider portions they occupy as national territory.

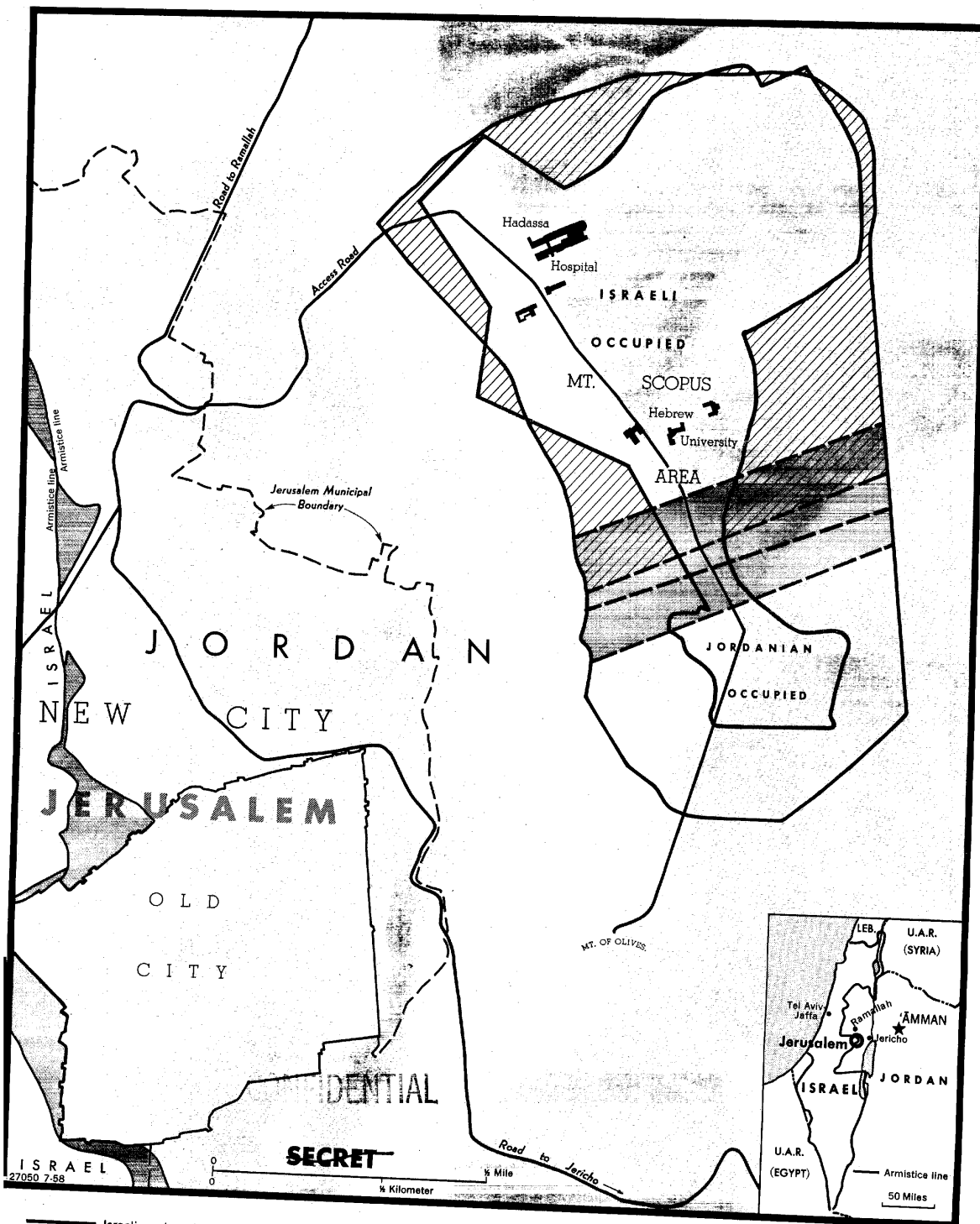
The boundaries of Mt. Scopus need to be clearly established if further trouble is to be avoided. Information recently made available by the American Consul General in Jerusalem provides sufficient data to piece together a rather strange sequence of events that have occurred over the past 10 years.

The original 7 July 1948 Commanders Agreement did not include a verbal description of the boundaries of Mt. Scopus, but instead included an unsigned map, of the same date, on which the boundaries were shown. It was necessary to refer to this map attachment in order to interpret properly the text of the agreement. Shortly thereafter, and for reasons not now known, somewhat different boundaries were delineated on another map, dated 21 July 1948, and this map was signed by a Jordanian colonel and an unauthorized United Nations Observer. The 21 July map was supposed to have been countersigned by the authorized United Nations Observer upon his return from the main armistice negotiations being held on the Island of Rhodes. Instead, [REDACTED] 25X1C the map was tucked in a desk drawer and forgotten; at any rate, valid signatures were not obtained. 25X1C

Apparently, the original 7 July map was never forwarded to the United Nations. If it was forwarded it was strangely ignored, since there is strong indication that the United Nations did not discover the discrepancy between the 7 July 1948 map and the 21 July 1948 map until the spring of 1958. In April 1958 an official United Nations emissary was sent to Jerusalem to investigate the Mt. Scopus problem. He concluded that the main reason for the general carelessness in delineating and establishing Mt. Scopus boundaries was that in 1948 no one believed that the Mt. Scopus situation would continue to be problematical for a full decade.

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The ambiguous situation not only has continued for a decade, but during that time the 21 July 1948 boundary was assumed to be the same as the 7 July 1948 boundary. This assumption was made primarily because the Jordanians attached the 21 July map to the 7 July Agreement, and consistently represented it as the official boundary map whenever discussions arose concerning Mt. Scopus. The Israelis did not publish a map differing from the Jordanian version of 21 July 1948 until 1956, but the 1956 Israeli version differed so materially from the Jordanian version that it attracted attention. Between 1956 and the spring of 1958, however, efforts to clarify the official portrayal of the boundary were stymied because the original map attached to the 7 July Agreement could not be found. Not until April 1958, when the American Consul General in Jerusalem reported that he had a "certified true copy" of the 7 July 1948 portrayal of the boundary, could the two 1948 versions be compared and the differences in alignment be noted. A further comparison of the boundary as shown on the 7 July map with the portrayal on the 1956 Israeli map leaves no doubt but that these two versions of the boundary alignment are identical.

What is the legal status of the two versions of the boundary? In April 1958 the United Nations Emissary, Dr. Francisco Urrutia, stated that neither boundary had a very strong legal basis, but of the two boundaries the one of 7 July 1948 appeared to have greater validity. The Israelis claim the 7 July boundary and the Jordanians in effect claim the 21 July boundary.

Because Mt. Scopus was occupied by both Jordanians and Israelis, provision was made for a No Man's Land between the two zones. Unfortunately, the Mt. Scopus problem is further complicated by the fact that there is also a difference of opinion concerning the limits of this neutral land. The Consulate General map contains a version of the No Man's Land boundaries that differs materially from that claimed by the Israelis. Assuming the Consulate General map to be correct, the Israeli map shows the No Man's Land boundaries too far south. This incursion into the Jordanian zone places more land under Israeli control.

Thus it appears that if the Consulate General map is correct, the Israelis have been maintaining a valid view on the outer boundaries of Mt. Scopus, but an invalid one on the interior No Man's Land boundaries. Conversely, the Jordanians have shown the zone location correctly, but have been mistaken about the outer boundaries of the Mt. Scopus area.

On the basis of documents now at hand, the boundaries of both the Mt. Scopus area and its No Man's Land could be established officially and delineated correctly. The situation is less ambiguous than it has ever been and, apparently, is capable of a fair and just solution. However, both the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the United States Consulate General have noticed a marked tendency on the part of the Israeli Government to obscure the issues involved and to prolong the Mt. Scopus impasse. The Israelis seem intent upon encouraging trouble in the area. Although they have carefully avoided full-scale military operations against the Jordanians, they have increased patrol actions and have harassed the Arab villagers living within the Israeli zone of Mt. Scopus. The purpose of this attitude and action is not known, but possibly the Israelis are interested in keeping the Mt. Scopus issue in the forefront as a smokescreen for activity elsewhere.

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